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Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7405th meeting
Tuesday, 17 March 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mrs. Jakubonė
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2015/141)

Special report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2015/163)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2015/141)

Special report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2015/163)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/141, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, and to document S/2015/163, which contains the special report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for this new opportunity to inform the Security Council on the situation in Darfur. As you have indicated, two recent reports of the Secretary-General will be the focus of our meeting today: the regular report on the activities of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) (S/2015/141) and the special report of March (S/2015/163). In accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 2173 (2014), the special report is dedicated specifically to the implementation of the new strategic priorities of UNAMID, highlighting the progress made and the major difficulties encountered during this exercise. It also provides a comprehensive analysis of the current situation in Darfur, information on the progress of the implementation of the UNAMID mandate and an update on the process of transferring certain activities of the Mission to agencies and United Nations country teams, as well as the development of an exit strategy for UNAMID.

Since the adoption of its three strategic priorities under resolution 2148 (2014) of 3 April 2014, UNAMID has made significant progress in their implementation. Members will recall that these three priorities are, first, mediation between the Government of the Sudan and non-signatory armed movements on the basis of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur; secondly, the protection of civilians, the facilitation of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel; and thirdly, the provision of support, in conjunction with the United Nations country team, to the mediation of community conflict, including through measures to address its root causes.

Regarding the first priority of mediation support, the Joint Chief Mediator of the African Union and the United Nations has continued to support the efforts of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel to establish an inclusive peace process. Throughout 2014, the Joint Chief Mediator has urged non-signatory rebel groups to join the peace process on the basis of the Doha Document without preconditions. The Sudanese Government has been encouraged to establish the conditions necessary a peaceful resolution of the various conflicts in the country.

Following these efforts, direct negotiations among the Government of the Sudan, the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi and the Justice and Equality Movement-Gibril Ibrahim took place in late November 2014 in Addis Ababa under the auspices of the High Level Panel. However, they have been suspended due to differences between the parties on the agenda and modalities of the discussions. The Sudanese Government in particular rejected proposals of rebel groups, which had insisted that humanitarian matters, reconciliation and other issues relating to development and land be the subject of separate negotiations. During the discussions, the Sudanese Government maintained its position that the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur is the sole frame of reference, while the rebel groups reiterated that the provisions of the agreement did not necessarily commit them.

With respect to the protection of civilians, UNAMID continued to protect the sites and camps for displaced people and civilians in general through

patrols and strategic deployment. To meet the needs of threatened civilians, the Mission established protective areas in and around the camps in Saraf Omra, Kosma and Um Baru in North Darfur, as well as in Khor Abeche in South Darfur. This required the deployment of additional military and police units to protect the humanitarian operations and provide them with the necessary logistical support. Through its contacts with the leaders of the various communities and the Sudanese authorities, UNAMID has helped prevent and thwart attacks on civilians population in Kaima, Labado and Kabkabiya in South Darfur, East Darfur and North Darfur, respectively.

To promote intercommunity dialogue and contain local conflicts, the Mission has been in constant contact with traditional leaders, central and local authorities, civil society and youth groups. This commitment, aimed at supporting mediation efforts, led to the signing of local cessation of hostilities agreements that have reduced the violence caused by the four major communal conflicts in the region, namely, those between the Ma'alia and the Rizeigat and between the Ma'alia and the Hammar in East Darfur; between the Beni Hussein and the Northern Rizeigat in North Darfur; and between the Salamat and the Misseriya in Central Darfur. Clearly, it is a highly disjointed scenario throughout Darfur.

(*spoke in English*)

Concurrently, the Mission has also worked towards addressing the three main challenges to its mandate implementation, as identified in last year's strategic review. Cooperation with the Government has improved, at least in terms of reduced duration of approvals for contingent-owned equipment and visa requests, although some are still outstyanding. But the biggest problem is the Government's denial of access to UNAMID to conflict-affected areas, which continues to impede significantly the ability of the Mission to implement its protection of civilians mandate. Members will recall that this was the case in Thabit, North Darfur, following the allegations of mass rape in October, and has also been the case in eastern Jebel Marra in the wake of the increase in fighting between the Government and the armed groups since December. Similar access restrictions have also been imposed on humanitarian actors, which has delayed response efforts in areas most affected by the recent operations.

Over the past 12 months, UNAMID has implemented a series of measures to address the challenge of the operational capabilities of its troops and their effectiveness on the ground. The military component has undergone structural and compositional changes and — I am pleased to say — increased the serviceability rate of its equipment to over 90 per cent; it has also improved the maintenance of oversight and the provision of guidance to its units. I have to add that, in recent months, we have taken drastic measures in four cases to send home some units that had proved on the ground to be behaving in a way that was not suitable. That includes the units and their commanders.

A military capability study will be conducted over the next three months in order to ensure that the current force deployment is fully aligned with the strategic priorities and evolving security challenges on the ground. On its part, the police component has completed the streamlining of its strength and command-and-control structures, and increased operational flexibility through proactive deployment in response to security threats. I have to add that many of these measures were taken on the basis of recommendations that were formulated by the first mission that the Director for Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership — whom I continue to call the Inspector General — sent last year to Darfur. He made a number of assessments and recommendations that have provided a very solid basis for us to work on during this period.

In order to improve internal coordination, UNAMID has also substantially revised its management structures and coordination mechanisms between its various components, yet some of the major challenges remain, including the need to improve the Mission's reporting and analysis of incidents, its internal and external communications approach, and the recruitment of personnel to key posts. Despite strategic and operational-level improvements in coordination with the United Nations country team, further progress is also needed on establishing an effective Darfur-wide early warning and response system.

Let me now provide an update and analysis of the current situation in Darfur. The security situation has deteriorated significantly over the past year. Fighting between the Government of the Sudan and the non-signatory armed groups has increased significantly. In an effort to defeat the armed groups, the Government has implemented its Decisive Summer military offensive through the use of the Rapid Support

Forces (RSF), a counter-insurgency militia with aerial and ground support from the Sudanese armed forces. That did not result in a decisive military victory, but the two-stage Government offensive significantly weakened and isolated the armed groups geographically. It also caused a significant loss of lives and large-scale displacement.

The first phase of the operation, which was conducted from January to May 2014, degraded the military capacity of the Sudan Liberation Army/ Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) and dislodged it from its strongholds in east and South Darfur. After a six-month lull in the fighting, which coincided with the rainy season, in December the Government launched the second phase of the operation, which focused primarily on removing the Sudan Liberation Army/ Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) from its strongholds in north and east Jebel Marra. In December 2014 and January 2015, Government forces attacked SLA/AW positions in North, West and Central Darfur, while the SLA-MM announced plans to retake some of the strongholds in had lost in the first phase of the offensive in North, South and East Darfur. In December, fighting between the Government and the SLA-MM erupted near Tawilla, North Darfur. In January, Government forces captured Orchi village, in the Um Baru locality in North Darfur, from the SLA/MM. Fighting continues to be reported in Jebel Marra, forcing the population to flee. Between 4 and 10 March, clashes were reported between the RSF and the SLA/MM in Central and South Darfur. Against that background, on 10 March, a joint World Food Programme-UNAMID convoy travelling in North Darfur was ambushed by unidentified armed men. I am pleased to inform the Council that the troops escorting the convoy behaved most gallantly and effectively.

The humanitarian situation in Darfur also deteriorated significantly in 2014. We estimate that no less than 450,000 people were displaced as a result of the violence — the highest number in any single year since the peak of the conflict, in 2004. Of those persons, at least 300,000 remain displaced, mostly in camps for internally displaced persons. The total number of displaced persons in Darfur has now reached above 2.5 million. That negative trend persists, most recently with the continuation of fighting. We estimate that at least 43,000 new displacements have occurred since the beginning of the year.

The current upsurge in violence in Darfur is largely attributable, at least for now, to the ongoing Government of the Sudan and the RSF military offensive. It is not directly linked to the forthcoming Sudanese general elections. As the Council knows, those are scheduled to start on 13 April. However, events on the ground may change with the intensification of election campaigns. Recent calls by Sheikh Musa Hilal for the boycott of the elections and the disruption of the electoral process across Darfur should his demands of the Government not be met could affect the political and security situation in North Darfur in the coming weeks. Should that threat materialize, existing inter-tribal tensions may be heightened with strict security measures and the deployment of additional Government security forces.

With the breakdown in the talks on Darfur and on the Two Areas and with the implementation of measures by the Government that had the effect of curtailing political freedom, the prospects for the holding of the national dialogue between the Government and the opposition before the elections remain doubtful. However, from 24 to 28 February, Sudanese opposition parties, armed movements and civil society held a meeting in Berlin, following which they adopted the Berlin declaration calling for the convening of an inclusive preparatory meeting at African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa to revive the national dialogue. The declaration seems to demonstrate a certain degree of consensus among the opposition to re-engage in the national dialogue. On 9 March, the National Congress Party welcomed the Berlin Declaration as well as meetings and agreements that could lead to the national dialogue without preconditions. It is said that President Al-Bashir subsequently pushed away the Berlin Declaration, so that remains to be clarified.

With regard to the steps towards the handover of certain tasks to the United Nations country team, preliminary discussions on identifying relevant tasks that could be transferred following the revision of the mission's strategic priorities have been completed. It is envisaged that the transfer would be implemented in phased manner, taking into account the security situation in Darfur and the availability of funds and capacity for the country team. Our proposal will be presented to the Council in the next report of the Secretary-General at the end of May.

Further to the Council's request on the development of an exit strategy, the United Nations, the African Union and the Government of the Sudan have commenced discussions. From 15 to 18 February in Khartoum, an agreement was reached on the terms of reference for

establishment of a joint working group, which started meeting today in Khartoum. The group will review the situation in Darfur and develop a road map for the gradual exit of the mission. Upon the completion of its work, it will submit its report on the exit strategy to the Government of the Sudan, the African Union Commission and the Secretariat. The report will then be submitted to the Council and to the African Union Peace and Security Council for consideration at the end of May. Needless to say, we count on the total cooperation of the Government of the Sudan in that very important phase, so that we can make progress.

(*spoke in French*)

In conclusion, the evolution of the situation in Darfur over the past 12 months has, unfortunately, shown no sign of improvement or tangible progress towards a resolution of the conflict. In that context, the three strategic priorities recommended by the review of UNAMID and endorsed by the Security Council remain entirely relevant. Their implementation is the primary objective of the mission. It is therfore more necessary than ever that the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council jointly intensify pressure on the parties so that they enter into genuine, direct negotiations for a cessation of hostilities, which is the first step towards a comprehensive and final peace in Darfur.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Hassan (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to commend you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month, during which the Council carried an important visit to the African continent. I also thank Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his briefing on the situation in Darfur and on the Secretary-Generals' quarterly regular report (S/2015/141) and the special report (S/2015/163) on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). The latter report covers the strategic review and covers an entire year.

There was an increase in the activities of armed groups in the first quarter of 2015, with attacks ocurring at seven localities in Darfur. At the start of the year, we were therefore forced to deploy the Rapid Support Forces, which, as I have often stated, are regular armed forces that are deployed rapidly. They are part and parcel of our armed forces, the sort of groups that exist in all countries. But the situation now is different, and we must look at it in the light of these facts. The report that we are considering covers the past three months. The assessment, which covers the whole year, is not accurate.

Paragraph 7 of resolution 2173 (2014) clearly requests the Secretary-General to conduct a comprehensive review of UNAMID's activities and the implementation of its strategic goals, in cooperation with the African Union and the parties concerned. That request is made in operative paragraph 7. The principle of an exit strategy is therefore mentioned in a resolution of the Security Council, which the Council admits.

The goal is also to determine which missions could be transferred to country teams, and the report of the Secretary-General also covers the exit strategy, in keeping with what Mr. Ladsous said. This is based on the progress that has been achieved in the peace process in Darfur. The special report of the Secretary-General, which covers the past year, states that the peace process is not unfolding as envisioned. In fact, the Doha agreements have been mostly implemented, except for several provisions, where there has been a delay regarding certain issues. But overall the process is moving forward very satisfactorily, and currently peace and stability prevail in most of Darfur.

Pockets of conflict remain in Darfur where armed groups that did not sign the Doha Document continue to operate. These groups are trying to sabotage the Doha process and to hinder the current exit strategy. Why is that? It is because these factions want to see a halt to large-scale returns; they want internally displaced persons to remain in the camps, so as to have the pretext of continuing to fight on their behalf. That is wrong.

Regarding the special report of the Secretary-General on the exit strategy, specifically paragraph 76, there are currently two rounds of negotiations between the Government of the Sudan, the African Union and the United Nations. These negotiations have led to the establishment of a working group tasked with defining and implementing an exit strategy. We are currently implementing this strategy in a gradual manner. The first step is the withdrawal of armed elements and then that of the other parties. Such exit should take place gradually, as agreed during the two negotiation sessions

in Khartoum. Our forces are ready to proceed. We would ask the United Nations to strengthen the capacity of the country team in order for it to fulfil the missions of UNAMID that will be transferred to it in accordance with resolution 2173 (2014) regarding mission transfer.

Regarding the working environment of UNAMID, the most recent report of the Secretary-General, which covers the past three months, states in its paragraph 36 that:

> "During the reporting period, the Government of the Sudan issued 523 visas for UNAMID personnel, including 12 civilians, 141 military, 236 police, 131 contractors and three consultants. As at 26 January, that is, a month and a half ago, 21 visa requests were pending".

We are speaking here of a mission composed of thousands of personnel, and there were only 21 visa requests pending.

I have just read out a paragraph from the report of the Secretary-General. Therefore any reference to constraints imposed on UNAMID is inaccurate. This mission is made up of thousands of personnel, and only 21 visa requests were pending. We respect and appreciate UNAMID and have cooperated with it ever since it was deployed, and we will continue to work with it. We will even strengthen our cooperation, because this is a very important time in terms of drawing up an exit strategy with respect to groups that did not sign the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. We have said repeatedly that there are no more reasons for these armed groups not to join the peace process and the national dialogue.

The Government has provided guarantees so as to enable the armed movements to take part freely in these various processes, and so we reject what the report states about the freeze in the political process and the fact that preparatory measures have been stopped. Those things are not true. It is therefore paradoxical that the report states in paragraph 37 that these processes made it possible to organize workshops in Addis Ababa from 17 to 20 November, with the participation of groups that did not sign the Doha Agreement. The report also mentions direct talks with JEM/Gibril and the SLA/MM, from 23 to 30 November. So any information referring to a stalling of the peace process is not accurate. It is true that the factions are very stubborn, and this requires a strong commitment on the part of the Council. The report also attempts to suggest that the situation is unstable owing to crime and armed conflicts. However, as we have said repeatedly, tribal violence in Darfur is as old as Darfur itself. We have never claimed that there was no more tribal violence, criminal activity or theft, but we cannot condition the withdrawal of the Mission on such considerations, which are as ancient as Darfur itself.

We would also like to point out that there has recently been reconciliation between two tribes in the region. The report mentions this reconciliation process in paragraph 73. We have been trying hard, together with UNAMID, to bring this conflict to a definitive end. Regarding what Mr. Ladsous said regarding the national dialogue process and the fact that certain factions have withdrawn from it, and the situation of Mr. Musa Hilal, who is a tribal chief. I would like to point out that the Mr. Hilal expressed his support for the elections yesterday — yet further information in the report that is not accurate.

Finally, I reaffirm our hope that the process of national dialogue that was launched on 27 January at the initiative of the President of the Republic will allow for the elections to be held in April. Of course, that does not mean that we are abandoning the dialogue; these are two parallel processes, and as the President stated, the dialogue will continue even after the elections.

Council members will be aware of the details of the President's visit to El Geneina in West Darfur on 4 March and the warm welcome he was given by the crowd. This is an excellent omen for the process of national dialogue and the elections. We therefore reiterate our request to the Security Council to pressure the armed groups that have refused to sign the Doha Document to join the peace process so that we can dedicate our energies and resources to the development and reconstruction of Darfur.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.